

*to Ireland, chm, Gen. Assembly of the
Presbyt. Ch.*

4

THE REGULATIONS

FORMED by the LAST

GENERAL SYNOD

FOR

ADMISSION of CANDIDATES

TO THE

HOLY MINISTRY,

WITH

A short Address of the PRESBYTERY of
ARMAGH, to their Congregations.



NEWRY;

Printed by GEORGE STEVENSON,

M,DCC,LXIII,





THE
REGULATIONS, &c.

Y Order of the General Synod I
B am to read you a Minute, for-
med at their last meeting, con-
cerning the Qualifications of young Men,
who offer themselves Candidates for the
Holy Ministry.

But that you may the better under-
stand the design of the following Re-
gulations, it was thought necessary by
the Presbytery to lay before you the
Occasion of forming them.

It is a thing too well known among
us, that many who offer themselves Can-
didates for the Ministry, are but very mo-
derately qualified for that Sacred Office.
This is a thing much lamented by us;
and in a particular manner distressing
to Ministers, to whom is committed the
care of examining and licensing Can-
didates. It were to be wished, that this
Matter appeared in the same light to
the People, that it does to us; but, we
believe it is almost universally the case
among Dissenters, to satisfy themselves
with censuring and finding fault with
Preachers not properly qualified, with-
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any remedy to this Inconvenience; or without so much as considering whether they themselves may not possibly be in some measure chargeable with this great fault.

Upon inquiring into this Matter, it is alledged, that the chief and principal cause of the scanty qualifications of too many of our Candidates is owing to the want of Encouragement from the People: that therefore those, who are able to give their Sons a liberal Education decline breeding them to the Ministry.

In the days of our Fathers, Gentlemen of the most worthy and reputable Families thought it an Honour to devote their Sons to that Sacred Office. But where do we see any Instance of such Zeal at present? Or where will you see Men even of decent easy Circumstances in trade think of breeding their Children that way? And to what shall we attribute this indifference, this strange neglect of what ought to be considered, at least, as one of the most important concerns of our lives? The interest of Religion is what every Nation of the World thinks to be of principal importance: and therefore provide for the Support of it by Civil and Religious Establishments. But we who dissent from these Establishments, and censure them as an encroachment on the Rights of Conscience and of private Judge,

Judgment, do we not consider our Religious Liberty as one of the noblest privileges we enjoy, and which we ought to transmit to our Children with a Just Sense of its importance and reality?

Now can this Cause be supported, and the Truths of Christianity taught and inculcated without a Succession of Ministers properly qualified? Can such Qualifications be acquired without a long course of Learning and Study? And can a liberal Education be gone through without much time and expence? But where is the incitement to submit to this expence? Where is the Encouragement to go through this tedious course of Learning? You all know there is none.

And, what is most Strange, is, that though there be no encouragement, yet it is expected, that young Men taken into the Ministry should be Men of Learning, should be fine Speakers, should have an easy, and good Address. And where these are not found, how ready and forward do we see People in censuring, finding fault, and turning into ridicule? Than which, we must own upon the footing things stand at present, we know no Conduct more unreasonable and unbecoming.

These things being laid before you, the great Question is concerning the remedy, and how it may be effected, that those, who are able to give their Children

dren the proper Education, may be induced, as formerly, to bring them up to the Ministry? This is a Question that deserves the attention of the body of Dissenters in the North; it deserves your attention, and the attention of every particular Congregation.

The remedy is easily pointed out, the difficulty is to bring it into practice. Which is so great, that for our part, we do not hope ever to see it effected.

But though we apprehend no due attention is to be expected from the People, nor from their past conduct is it so much as to be hoped, that any remedy will take its rise from them; yet as the cause we are engaged in, is the cause of Truth and Righteousness, which in the days of our Fathers, has been protected by the Providence of God amidst many difficulties, and Severe Trials; and as from the divine goodness we have reason to expect the continuance of this protection, so ought we not to be wanting to ourselves: - Therefore the Ministers at the last *General Synod* thought it their duty to provide as far as they could, against the Inconvenience complained of, and for this purpose, they Ordered the following *Rules* to be observed in examining and licensing Candidates for the Ministry.

First,] That every Candidate for the Ministry before he is admitted to Tryals shall be obliged to produce to the *Presbytery*, a Certificate of his having attend-

Anatolius is highly celebrated for extensive learning: he was Colleague with *Theotecnus* Bp of the parish of *Caesarea*, & he was afterwards Bp of the parish of *Laodicea*.

Eusebius Eccl. hist. p. 200.

ed the *University* at least two Seasons, and particularly the Classes for *Natural* and *Moral Philosophy*, and if he has attended only two Seasons, he shall not be admitted in less than Six Years from the time of his first entering the *University*.

Second,] That a Candidate, who attends the *University* only three Seasons, shall not be admitted in less than Five Years from the time of his first entering the *College*.

Third,] That a Candidate who produces Certificates of his having attended the *University* regularly for Four Years, shall be admitted without delay.

Fourth,] That the principal examination of Candidates in the different branches of Science, shall precede their being admitted to Tryals, and that every Candidate shall be examined in the *Languages*, *Logick*, *Metaphysicks*, *Natural* and *Moral Philosophy*, *Church History*, and *Theology*.

Fifth,] That this course of examination shall be gone through at three different meetings of the Presbytery at least. At the first, the *Languages*, and *Moral Philosophy*; at the second, *Logick*, *Metaphysicks* and *Natural Philosophy*: and at the third, *Church History* and *Theology*. But to encourage young Men to spend as much time as possible at the *University*; such as have attended regularly for four Years, shall have their examination dispatched at one meeting. And that at some meeting of the Presbytery previous to the holding of said examination,

See Eusebius's account of Origen's manner of
teaching in his school at Alexandria.

tion, particular Members shall be appointed Examinators in each of these branches of Science.

Sixth,] That when any Candidate is licensed, a Certificate from the Presbytery of his having spent the time specified and gone through the several examinations in the manner required, and given the Ordinary number of discourses, shall be transmitted to the Synod's Clerk; and if a Certificate of this kind be not produced to the next General Synod, such Licentiates shall not be entered into our Records as belonging to our Body;

Seventh,] That every Candidate shall be obliged to produce from one or more of the *Professors* of the *College* he attends, a Certificate of the time he hath spent each Season at the *University*; and that nothing less than five Months shall be deemed a sufficient time for a Seasons attendance.

It was also proposed and agreed to, that Mr. *Campbell* be appointed, and accordingly is hereby appointed to Write to the Universities of *Glasgow* and *Edinburgh* to beg that the *Professors* will be particular in the Certificates, they give to *Irish Protestant Dissenting Students*, to signify the time of their Stay in the *College* each Session, and give the best account they can of their Moral Characters.



